

Appendix P

Helena Open Lands Public Involvement Process for Recreation

Adopted June 8, 2020

Appendix P accompanies Chapter 7 as amended in 2020. This applies specifically to major recreation projects and is a calendar year annual process.

Step 1: Fall Open Lands major projects listening session

- 1.1. The City Open Lands and Recreation Department (City) and Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee (HOLMAC) hosts a public listening session in **mid-September** each year to:
 - 1.1.1. City presents City proposed major projects
 - 1.1.2. City present a list of project suggestions submitted to the City during the current calendar year by members of the public
 - 1.1.3. City and HOLMAC solicit additional project suggestions
 - 1.1.4. City and HOLMAC accept feedback on proposed projects
- 1.2. The public has the opportunity to submit additional project ideas and comments to the City and HOLMAC for 15 calendar days following the listening session.
- 1.3. The City will notify the public of this listening session at least 10 calendar days prior using the following notification methods: major trailheads posting, email to stakeholder list maintained by the City, posting on City website, news release, City social media.

Step 2: Development of Draft Major Projects for upcoming calendar year

- 2.1 The City conducts preliminary evaluation of proposed major projects and project suggestions received as of October 1. Projects are evaluated based on alignment with the goals identified in Chapter 7, public feedback received to date, Helena Open Lands (HOL) needs, available resources and guidance from HOLMAC. The City prepares the following documents:
 - 2.1.1 a draft list of major projects under consideration for implementation in the upcoming calendar year
- 2.2 At HOLMAC's regularly scheduled **mid-October** meeting, the City:
 - 2.2.1 presents a draft list of major projects under consideration for implementation in the upcoming calendar year
 - 2.2.2 accepts public feedback on proposed projects
 - 2.2.3 solicits guidance from HOLMAC
- 2.3 The City will notify the public of this HOLMAC meeting at least 10 calendar days prior, using the following notification methods: major trailheads posting, email to stakeholder list maintained by the City, posting on City website, news release, City social media.

- 2.4** Following the mid-October HOLMAC meeting, the City will:
- 2.4.1** refine the draft list of major projects (if necessary) based on public feedback received at the HOLMAC meeting and guidance from HOLMAC
 - 2.4.2** complete a project analysis form* (see project analysis form) for each major project under consideration for implementation in the upcoming calendar, or future, calendar years
 - 2.4.3** finalize the draft list of Major Projects
- 2.5** When City staff identify significant public interest, or if requested by stakeholders, City staff may meet with interested stakeholders at the earliest opportunity about a specific project. If a meeting is scheduled, the City shall provide notice at least 10 days prior to the project meeting in the same fashion as described above.

Step 3: Major Projects Open House

- 3.1** The City will release all major projects with project analysis reviews for public review at least 10 days in advance of the Major Projects Open House by posting on the City website, City social media, an email to stakeholder list maintained by the City, and via hard copy at the Helena Parks, Recreation & Open Lands office.
- 3.2** The City will host an Open House in **mid-November** each year to:
- 3.2.1** present Major Projects with project analysis reviews
 - 3.2.2** accept public comment on major projects and project analysis review
- 3.3** The public has the opportunity to provide comments to the City for 15 calendar days following the Open House.
- 3.4** The City will notify the public of this Open House at least 10 calendar days prior, using the following notification methods: major trailheads posting, email to stakeholder list maintained by the City, posting on City website, news release, City social media. This notification will include information on the release of the Draft Major Projects (see Step 3.1).

Step 4: Final annual open lands proposed major projects presented to City Commission

- 4.1** The City will present Major Open Lands projects to the City Commission at the regularly scheduled Commission meeting in the **first half of December**.
- 4.2** Major Open Lands projects will be posted on the City Commission meeting agenda per commission public notice requirements

Step 5: Approval of Pending Projects

- 5.1** Any project that has been previously approved by the Commission in prior years, but has not been initiated or completed, will continue to proceed without further Commission action.
- 5.2** Some major project analysis for projects having gone through this public involvement process may extend beyond the annual timeline. In that case, City staff will present the project to the City Commission for action to approve or amend when it has been completed. Upon approval, the project will be appended to the Major Projects list.

Notes:

- It is assumed that all major projects proposed for the HOL will go through the public involvement process. However, it is acknowledged that the Helena City Commission has the authority to alter aspects of this process to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, or complexities involved with a specific project. In these cases, the City will strive to keep the public informed and involved in all HOL decision-making.
- Nothing in this process will prohibit the City from notifying the public of a potential major project under consideration and initiating project analysis prior to the September Listening Session (Step 1).
- This process does not impede the public's ability to submit to the City a project at any time.

Proposed 'Minor' and 'Major' Projects Definitions for HOL

Projects Considered Minor

- Routine trail maintenance
- Signage replacement or updates
- Routine facilities maintenance (e.g., existing trailheads and parking lots)
- Erosion control
- Trail re-routes that improve sustainability and/or safety without changing the fundamental character of the trail.
- Obliteration of social trails

Potential to be Major

- New trail, or trailhead construction (includes extension of existing trails)
- New or changed trail usage rules (i.e., limiting or changing use on an existing trail, allowing new uses on a trail)
- Trail removal and/or reroute
- Potential for significant public interest
- Substantial project cost (i.e., in excess of \$25,000)